

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 CIEP-01

LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 USIE-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

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FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7303

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

DOD WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T NASSAU 1630

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR BF US

SUBJ: FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS

1. CONSISTENT WITH MY CONTINUING EFFORT TO MAINTAIN GENERAL COORDINATION WITH BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER MENNELL, I INVITED HIM BY TODAY FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING A FILL-IN ON THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS ON THE ABOVE SUBJECT. IN RESPONSE TO MY BRIEFING A NEW AND RATHER INTERESTING EXPOSITION OF BRITISH POLICY EMERGED.

2. FOLLOWING MY EXPOSITION I SUGGESTED THAT IF GCOB DID NOT SUBSTANTIALLY LOWER ITS SIGHTS THERE WAS NOT GOING TO BE A NEW AGREEMENT. I WONDERED WHETHER HMG WOULD NEVERTHELESS PUSH AHEAD WITH ITS COMMITMENT EVEN THOUGH IT WOULD NO LONGER HAVE ACCESS TO AUTEC. IN RESPONSE MENNELL INDICATED THAT A MESSAGE HAD RECENTLY BEEN DISPATCHED FROM THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON TO LONDON ASKING WHETHER STATE DEPARTMENT COULD BE ADVISED THAT THE BRITISH COMMITMENT OF 3.5 MILLION POUNDS

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TO THE GCOB WAS TO BE CONSIDERED CONTINGENT UPON A SATISFACTORY

RESOLUTION OF THE U.S./GCOB NEGOTIATION. MENNELL STATED THAT THE MESSAGE HAVING BEEN DISPATCHED ONLY A DAY OR SO AGO THERE WAS NOT AS YET A REPLY FROM LONDON.

3. MENNELL THEN WENT ON TO REPEAT WHAT HE HAD SAID IN AN EARLIER CONVERSATION TO THE EFFECT THAT IT HAD BEEN HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT THE 3.5 MILLION POUND BRITISH OFFER WAS AN UNCONDITIONAL GIFT ON INDEPENDENCE. MENNELL SAID THAT "HE HAD APPARENTLY BEEN MISTAKEN IN THAT BELIEF AND THAT TO THE CONTRARY, THE 3.5 MILLION COMMITMENT IS IN FACT CONTINGENT UPON A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THE U.S./GCOB NEGOTIATION." HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT WITHOUT ACCESS TO AUTC HE DID NOT BELIEVE MINISTERS WOULD APPROVE THE CONCLUSION OF THEIR AGREEMENT WITH THE GCOB SINCE IN THIS PERIOD OF FISCAL AUSTERITY "THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WAS NOT GOING TO OFFER 3.5 MILLION POUNDS AND RECEIVE NOTHING IN RETURN." IN THIS CONNECTION, MENNELL ALSO REVEALED THAT A PROPOSAL HAD BEEN MADE EARLIER ON TO UP THE UK OFFER TO 4.6 MILLION POUNDS IN ORDER TO COMPENSATE FOR THE RATE OF INFLATION AND THAT "MINISTERS HAD TURNED THIS DOWN FLAT."

4. MENNELL FURTHER VENTURED THE VIEW THAT IT WOULD STILL BE UNWISE FOR HMG TO ANNOUNCE AT THIS TIME TO THE GCOB THAT IT WOULD BE UNWILLING TO UNDERTAKE NEGOTIATIONS UNTIL ASSURED THAT THE U.S./GCOB NEGOTIATION WAS SUCCESSFUL, RATHER HIS PREFERENCE WAS THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS PROCEED TO THE POINT OF HAVING AN AGREED DOCUMENT BUT THAT THE AGREEMENT NOT BE CONCLUDED UNTIL THERE WAS ASSURANCE OF AN AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S. THE WAY MENNELL PUT IT, HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BEST IF THE BRITISH RESPONDED TO ANY FURTHER GCOB OVERTURES BY SAYING THEY WERE PREPARED TO CONTINUE THE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE GCOB WAS PROCEEDING IN PARALLEL WITH THE U.S. AND OF COURSE THE FINALIZATION OF THE BRITISH AGREEMENT WOULD BE CONTINGENT UPON A SATISFACTORY CONCLUSION OF THE AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S. I SAID I THOUGHT THAT MADE GOOD SENSE PROVIDING THAT EXPLICIT CONDITION WAS AT SOME POINT MADE CLEAR. IN RESPONSE TO MY SPECIFIC QUESTION, MENNELL CONFIRMED THAT LONDON HAD PUT A HOLD ON NEGOTIATIONS PENDING CLARIFICATION OF U.S. POSITION.

5. COMMENT: MENNELL'S COMMENTS WERE EXTREMELY REVEALING. AS I HAVE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, IT HAS BEEN APPARENT TO ME FROM SECRET

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THE OUTSET THAT MENNELL, IN CONTRAST TO HIS PREDECESSOR, WAS GUNG HO FOR WINDING UP AN AGREEMENT WITH THE GCOB. HE HAS SAID AS MUCH TO ME. ALTHOUGH I DID NOT QUERY HIM ON THE MATTER, I SUSPECT THAT IT WAS HE WHO PROPOSED THE INCREASE FROM 3.5 TO 4.6 MILLION POUNDS WHICH WAS REJECTED BY LONDON. I FURTHER SUSPECT THAT HIS REPORTING OF HIS EARLIER CONVERSATION WITH ME IN WHICH HE HAD DESCRIBED THE BRITISH 3.5 MILLION COMMITMENT AS A "GIFT" WITHOUT STRINGS AND SUBJECT ONLY TO WORKING OUT

THE DETAILS EVOKED A NEGATIVE RESPONSE FROM LONDON. LONDON MIGHT WELL HAVE BEEN INDUCED TO SUCH A RESPONSE BY THE EARLIER INDICATION I HAD GIVEN TO MENNELL SUGGESTIVE OF THE FACT THAT THE U.S. WOULD CLOSE DOWN THE BASES HERE IF THE GCOB EXPECTATIONS FOR QUID WERE UNREASONABLE THEREBY ENDING UK PRESENCE AT AUTEK. WHILE MENNELL, WHO IS AN EXPERIENCED AND REASONABLY SMOOTH DIPLOMAT, CARRIED IT OFF PRETTY WELL, IT SEEMED NEVERTHELESS CLEAR THAT HE WAS UNDER FAIRLY EXPLICIT INSTRUCTIONS TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT AS TO HIS ERRONEOUS EARLIER STATEMENT TO ME THAT THE BRITISH COMMITMENT WAS AN OUTRIGHT GIFT AND BY IMPLICATION IN NO WAY TIED TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION TO THE U.S. NEGOTIATION AND THE ASSURANCE OF CONTINUED BRITISH ACCESS TO AUTEK. I SUSPECT MENNELL IS PERSONALLY UNHAPPY BY THE TURN OF EVENTS SINCE I THINK HE FELT HE WAS CLOSE TO WRAPPING UP THE AGREEMENT WITH THE GCOB. (ONE RUMOR WHICH HAS REACHED ME, AND I DO NOT KNOW HOW MUCH CREDENCE TO ACCORD IT, IS THAT MENNELL IS BUCKING FOR KNIGHTHOOD AND IS SEEKING SOME MEANS FOR PROJECTING A PERSONAL IMAGE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT.) TOWARD THE END OF THE CONVERSATION MENNELL OFFERED, RATHER WEAKLY I THOUGHT, THE NOTION THAT PERHAPS THE BRITISH WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONCLUDE THEIR AGREEMENT WITH THE GCOB IF THE U.S. WERE TO AGREE TO CONTINUED UK ACCESS TO AUTEK EVEN WITHOUT A NEW U.S./GCOB AGREEMENT PROVIDING THE U.S. WERE ABLE TO CONTINUE THEIR FACILITIES OCCUPATION ON THE YEAR-TO-YEAR EXTENSION BASIS. I SAID I THOUGHT THERE WAS NO WAY THAT THIS WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE U.S. IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN THAT AT SOME POINT A MODERNIZATION OF OUR FACILITIES WOULD BE REQUIRED AND I SERIOUSLY DOUBTED THAT WE WOULD BE WILLING TO UNDERTAKE A CAPITAL EXPENDITURE WITH SUCH A TENUOUS OCCUPANCY BASIS. MENNELL SOMEWHAT MOURNFULLY AGREED.

6. THE SUM AND SUBSTANCE OF THE ABOVE IS THAT IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE BRITISH ARE PREPARED TO MAKE THEIR COMMITMENT CON-
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TINGENT UPON A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF A U.S./GCOB FACILITIES AGREEMENT AND, IF WE ORCHESTRATE IT WITH CARE, THIS GIVES US ANOTHER BIT OF LEVERAGE TO EXERCISE IN OUR NEGOTIATIONS. IT ALSO SUGGESTS TO ME THAT WE SHOULD MOVE FORWARD WITH THE PLANNED WASHINGTON DISCUSSIONS WITH HMG ASSUMING WE RECEIVE A FAVORABLE RESPONSE TO OUR SUGGESTIONS FOR SUCH DISCUSSIONS IN LATE OCTOBER. INDEED, WE MAY WISH TO DELAY SENDING FORWARD OUR RESPONSE TO ADDERLEY'S LETTERS TO ME UNTIL AFTER WE HAVE HAD THOSE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE BRITISH.
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